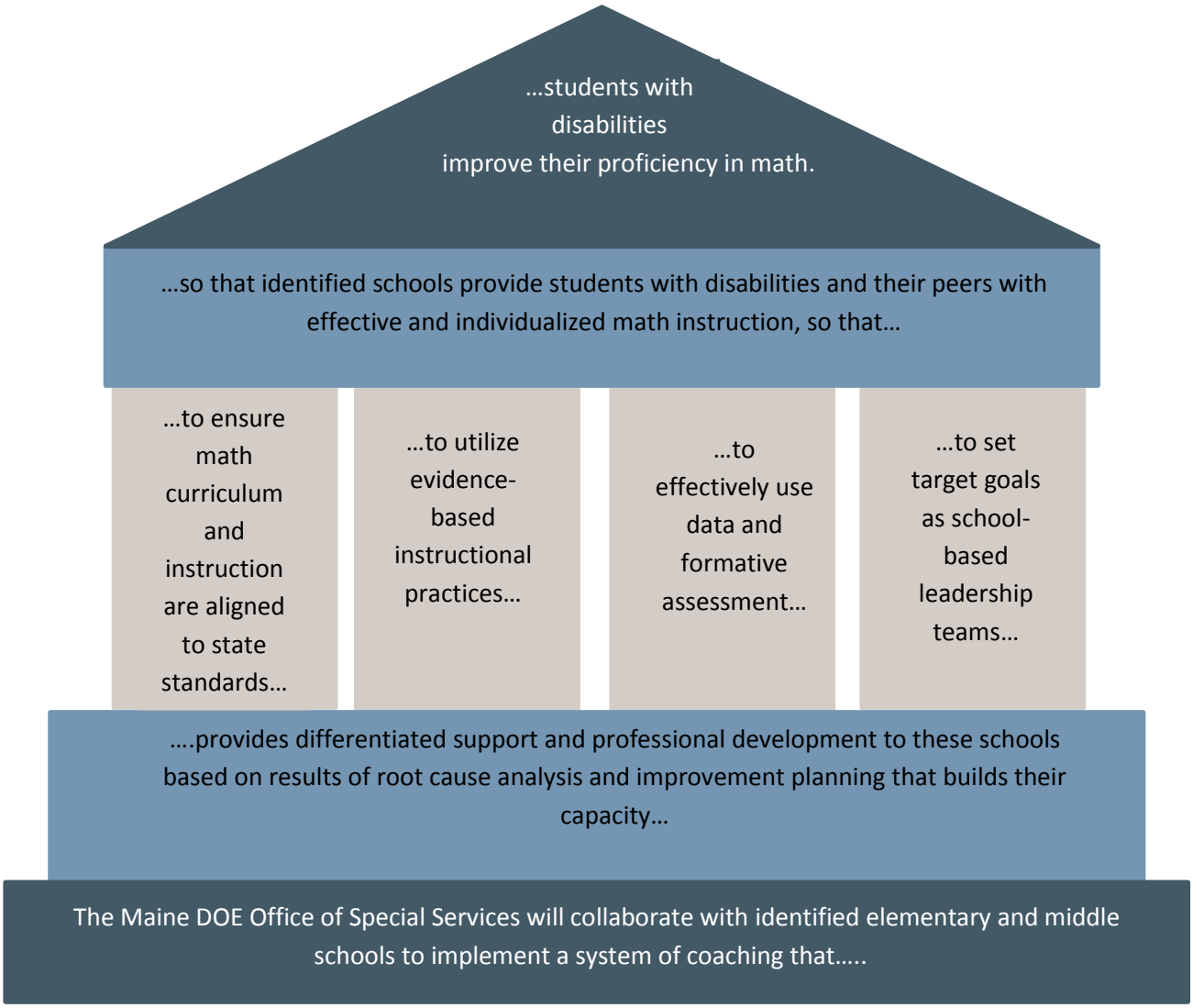
COMPONENT 5: THEORY OF ACTION

5.A. A graphic illustration that shows the rationale of how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will increase the State's capacity to lead to meaningful change in LEAs.

Maine's Theory of Action



5.B. A description of how the graphic illustration shows the rationale of how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will to the achievement of improved results for students with disabilities.

Stakeholders revealed through collaborative work that, while there are common root causes to poor proficiency in math for students with disabilities, schools have individual challenges with math instruction that impact outcomes for these students (see Appendix A, Label 4, page 33).

Schools that experience significant gaps in math proficiency between students with disabilities and the general population can improve their practices and impact outcomes in math for students with disabilities, though not all of these schools currently receive differentiated support from the State.

State of Maine theory of action describes how the use of the coaching model with a structured implementation system will successfully support these schools in accessing and implementing activities that will address their root causes for poor proficiency in math. The Dirigo Star implementation system and coaching as a competency driver are evidence based practices that are currently used in Maine DOE initiatives.

Vision: Students with disabilities will achieve a level of proficiency in math commensurate with their peers.

Theory of Action: When schools have access to coaches and an implementation system to support self-analysis and improvement of their teaching practices in math, outcomes in math for students with disabilities improve.

Maine DOE will identify schools with whole school scaled math scores on the 2013-2014 state-wide assessment (NECAP) that are at or above proficient and with the highest gaps in scaled math scores between students with disabilities and the general education population.

Identified schools will be invited to participate in a process of self-assessment and evidence-based improvement practices. The SEA will train and provide coaches to the participating schools, along with training on and access to the implementation system (Dirigo Star). Schools, in turn, will commit to administrative support and the school and district level, the establishment of a building level implementation team and an agreed upon amount of time for coaching and contact. The SEA and schools receiving support will work collaboratively to establish efficient communication methods and schedules that work for both.

Utilizing the support of coaches with expertise in special education and math instruction, schools will identify their root causes impacting gaps in math proficiency for students with disabilities as compared to their peers without disabilities. Coaches will support schools in the development and implementation of effective, evidence based improvement plans. These plans will include activities to assess and address

1) inclusive practices and differentiated instruction practices;
2) math instruction for students with disabilities aligned with State standards;
3) a culture of collaboration and support;
4) access and use of current state initiatives; and
5) root causes to poor proficiency in math specific to the school identified as having a gap.

The State-identified Measurable Result: Students with disabilities in grades 3-8 will demonstrate improved math proficiency as measured by math scores on the State assessment in a subset of schools wherein the total student population demonstrates proficiency at or above the State average but where substantial achievement gaps (15-32 points) exist between students with disabilities and their general education peers.

5.C. The State describes involvement of multiple internal and external stakeholders in development of the Theory of Action.

While the SiMR was selected prior to the September, 2014 stakeholders meeting, the SSIP workgroup stayed in contact with the stakeholders regarding identification of the subgroup of schools, the baseline performance given the identified schools and target selection (see Appendix A, Label 4, page 33).

Since that time, the SSIP workgroup working with the TA providers from the National Center for Systemic Improvement and the IDEA Data Center, and with our OSEP State Contact have identified the appropriate scope of the measurable result and how the proposed improvement activities will lead to improvements in outcomes for students with disabilities addressed in the SiMR. Combined with the data analysis and infrastructure analysis on which stakeholders had previously provided feedback, the foundation of a theory of action was developed.

Communication with stakeholders after the September 2014 meeting occurred electronically through emails and newsletters in order to be sensitive to the time commitment SSIP stakeholders had given to the process to date and support the ability of members to continue their participation into Phase II. Stakeholders reviewed the proposed theory of action and responded with comments and requests for information. Feedback indicated the theory of action accurately reflected the many discussions stakeholders had on the evidence in data and infrastructure, the measureable result including why a subpopulation is appropriate for the SSIP, the evidence that the improvement strategies will lead to the measurable result, and the potential for scale-up to impact students with disabilities throughout the State of Maine.